DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 147 477 08 CE 013 245

TITLE Basic Principles for Agriculture and Agribusiness Education.
INSTITUTION Iowa State Univ. of Science and Technology, Ames. Dept. of Agricultural Education.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 10p.; For related documents see CE 013 244-247

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agribusiness; *Agricultural Education; Career Education; *Educational Objectives; *Educational Philosophy; Vocational Agriculture
IDENTIFIERS *Iowa; Project 2000

ABSTRACT

Seven statements are presented describing the basic principles undergirding agriculture and agribusiness education in Iowa. They define agricultural education broadly by its orientations toward (1) democratic participation, (2) pragmatic orientation and values development, (3) change through flexibility and continuity, (4) decision making through problem-solving, (5) experience centered instruction, (6) individual and social needs, (7) agricultural resource management, and (8) interrelationships of agriculture. Agribusiness is seen as part of the broad field of agriculture. A preface statement lists three functions to be performed by agricultural education: educating individuals for employment in the field of agriculture and agribusiness, avoactional agricultural coursework at all educational levels, and instruction in the significance of agriculture, food, and food production for all students. (Available separately is the final report of the project in which the principles were developed through the involvement of educators at all levels and specialists in agricultural education, educational philosophy, and curriculum development--CE 013 244.) (JT)

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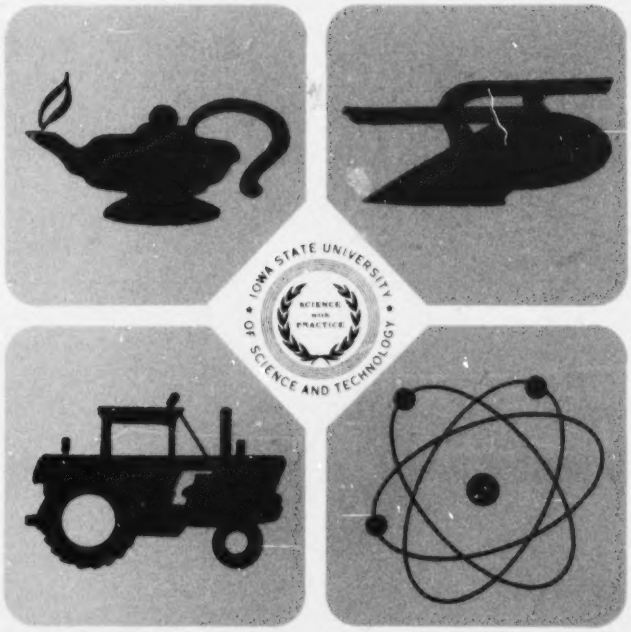

PROJECT 2000
BASIC PRINCIPLES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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FOR
AGRICULTURE AND
AGRIBUSINESS EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Ames, Iowa

1976

CE 013 245

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Foreword

The emphasis in developing these principles, and particularly, the curriculum guidelines which will follow, is intended to serve the needs of individuals desiring education in agriculture and agribusiness through public education in Iowa. The principles were developed as a part of the project entitled "Strategies for Revision of Curriculum and Program Restructuring of Vocational Agriculture in Iowa." Funds for conducting the project were provided in the form of a grant by the U. S. Office of Education under Public Law 88-210 as amended, more commonly referred to as the "Vocational Education Act of 1963." The ideas expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U. S. Office of Education and no official endorsement by this federal agency should be inferred. The project was conducted under the supervision of Iowa State University and administered through the College of Agriculture, the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station, and the Department of Agricultural Education.

Functions of Agriculture and Agribusiness Education

Agriculture and agribusiness education efforts at all levels of instruction in Iowa are concerned with the total agricultural situation in the United States and the world. Such education should not be limited to the development of specific skills and technical knowledge. This means that somewhere in the program, three functions must be performed. First, there is the function of educating individuals for employment in the field of agriculture and agribusiness (occupational awareness, exploration and preparation). Secondly, there is a need at all educational levels for avocational agricultural coursework so that other students and adults may take courses of interest to them. Thirdly, in view of the crucial importance of food, it is essential that insofar as the resources permit, instruction be given in the significance of agriculture, food, and food production. This instruction would not have to be given exclusively by the agricultural instructor, but it may well be given by the other educational personnel who have or can acquire the competence for such teaching. However, agricultural education personnel must be committed to these goals and must provide the necessary leadership in agriculture and agribusiness education for all students, including the non-vocational students throughout the school.

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR AGRICULTURE AND AGRIBUSINESS EDUCATION

Introduction

The statements on the following pages describe the basic principles undergirding agriculture and agribusiness education in Iowa. Educators at all levels, as well as specialists in agricultural education, educational philosophy, and curriculum development assisted in identifying, describing, and reacting to each of the principles.

The term agriculture and agribusiness education is broad and is defined by the following orientations toward: 1) democratic participation; 2) pragmatic orientation and values development; 3) change through flexibility and continuity; 4) decision making through problem-solving; 5) experience centered; 6) individual and social needs; 7) agriculture resource management; and 8) interrelationships of agriculture. Thus, the term is interpreted as referring to education in the broad field of agriculture of which agribusiness is a part.

Basic Principles

Democratic Participation

Agriculture and agribusiness education is committed to democracy as a political and social philosophy and an educational methodology. This educational discipline recognizes that values and propositions are ultimately tested by their consequences in the lives of human beings. While the contributions of specialized expertise are vital, evaluation of decision making must eventually refer to the experience of those who are affected by policies and programs.

The fundamental obligation of agriculture and agribusiness education is to prepare the learner to become progressively better able to be self-directing—to choose and judge for oneself on the basis of the most intelligent consideration of the alternatives, and to assume responsibility and accountability to oneself and to the community for those decisions. It is recognized that the learner is not always able to determine what to study, direct his or her study, or unilaterally form character. Parents, the community, and the teacher have a definite responsibility to guide, and in an appropriate sense, discipline the education of the learner.

The democratic approach is necessary for agriculture and agribusiness education to fulfill its responsibilities both to the individual and to society. Personal initiative, ability to formulate and test

hypotheses, knowledge of the methods of inquiry, and understanding of the views of those with whom one disagrees are among the special abilities required in a free society. In a democracy, these capabilities are required in agriculture and agribusiness as they are in other fields of endeavor.

Pragmatic Orientation and Values Development

Agriculture and agribusiness education conforms to and concurs with the theory of knowing and valuing which refers thinking and action to all consequences to oneself and others as the final test of the true and the good. In this process both the short and long range consequences should be considered. Ends and means can be distinguished, but they cannot be separated in the sense that no ends can be achieved without the use of means, and every end, when achieved, leads to further consequences. Accordingly, to will the end and not the means is an exercise in futility, although in many situations, alternative means are possible.

In judging human ends and purposes, values as well as descriptive propositions (i.e. "If this, then that" statements) must be included. The source of values is human wishes, desires, and wants, but, as such, wishes, desires, and wants cannot be evaluated. A wish, desire, or want becomes a value when it has been examined in terms of the consequences. All such valuation takes place in a given context because in one situation an action may lead to one set of consequences, while in another situation, a different set of consequences. The consequences produced are judged good or bad in terms of our other values. As a result, it is impossible to judge all our values at once but any one can be isolated for evaluation. We judge our values in terms of (a) consistency with the rest of our value system, and (b) the consequences of the action to which the value will lead.

It is necessary to remember in any valuation process that we undertake some activities because they are intrinsically enjoyable or interesting, whereas we undertake others because they are essential means to some ends which we prize. However, as stated above, no activity can be judged as good simply because it is enjoyable. It is first necessary to determine that the consequences of engaging in the enjoyable activity are good for all those involved.

Change Through Flexibility and Continuity

Agriculture and agribusiness education is characterized by flexibility and adaptability rather than rigidity in its attempt to enable the student to cope intelligently with constant and significant change. The individual is constantly confronted with problems of adaptation to an ever changing environment. We are living in a world in which change is so rapid and so significant that education can never be regarded as conclusive or final. Accordingly, the need exists for a continuous reassessment of educational activities. However, this revision should proceed with due regard for the fact that even in the most revolutionary situation, a revision is characterized to a significant degree by continuity as well as by significant change.

Decision Making Through Problem-Solving

Problem-solving as an approach to learning and method of teaching implies active involvement in discovering solutions to problems directly or indirectly relevant to the needs of the learner and the realities of society. This means that the learner must think for himself, make choices among different courses of action, and take responsibility for the consequences.

Problem-solving differs in certain respects from memorizing or even understanding the accumulated bodies of knowledge per se. These bodies of knowledge are of enormous importance in problem solving, but they are used as resources in the solutions of problems rather than the direct study of the particular body of knowledge itself.

Problem-solving involves a problem for which alternate courses of action are possible. It consists of a determination of the appropriate means to achieve the ends desired. Usually such problem-solving involves several phases such as: defining the problem, collecting information and knowledge, formulating hypotheses, testing hypotheses, judging the consequences, making a valid decision, and implementing the decision. Decision making through problem-solving is fully effective when the problem is genuine rather than manufactured, it is accepted by the student as a problem of importance, and the student participates with others in planning and directing the process by which the solution is reached.

In agriculture and agribusiness education, problem-solving is the optimum approach to learning and method of teaching, although not the sole approach or method. Problem-solving may incorporate both intellectual and physical activity. However, fundamental to all problem-solving is intellectual activity.

Experience Centered

Agriculture and agribusiness education has as a major premise that experience whether good, bad, or indifferent, is the medium in which the human being lives and dies, and is the context in which learning occurs. Experience provides the medium through which the individual comprehends his world. For such experience, however, to be meaningful, the student must understand the relationship between what he does and the ensuing consequences.

Experiences can be vicarious as well as direct. The fundamental basis of tested knowledge incorporates a large measure of vicarious experiences. In agriculture and agribusiness education the use of direct experiences is utilized to develop knowledge and skills and enhance understanding and retention of knowledge and skills.

In agriculture and agribusiness education, formal and informal instructional situations (classroom, laboratory, supervised occupational experience, etc.) are the means of providing vicarious and direct experiences. These experiences are based on present situations and conditions and past experiences of the learner.

Individual and Social Needs

Agriculture and agribusiness education is oriented toward (a) the biological and social needs of persons, and (b) the needs of the society for which the individual is being educated. Such education is primarily concerned with assuring a continuing quality and quantity of raw and processed materials needed to supply basic human needs (food, clothing, shelter, etc.) and with the development of the knowledge necessary to enable the individual to understand the role of agriculture in the life of the nation and the world. Agriculture and agribusiness education likewise is concerned with serving the needs of individuals and groups in developing competence in individually satisfying and socially responsible knowledge, skills, and occupations leading toward individual fulfillment and social viability. Satisfaction with one's occupation is of great importance both to the individual and to the efficiency of the productive process.

Needs, both individual and societal, should be determined by a cooperative process in which all concerned participate to the extent of their ability to do so. Among the individuals and groups that must be included in the process are students, teachers, parents, community representatives, and pertinent specialists. In the determination of the needs of the student, his views should receive major, though not exclusive, consideration. In determining the needs of society, additional expert judgement should perhaps play a much larger role than was the case in determination of individual needs.

Agriculture Resource Management

In agriculture and agribusiness education subject matter is determined by individual and societal needs of the particular community and directed largely toward the management of the factors, forces, processes, and resources involved in the conduct of agricultural enterprises. Theories, ideas, and concepts used as a basis for such activity are derived largely from individual experiences and experimental investigation including both the tested experiences of those engaged in agriculture and rigorous processes of the pertinent sciences.

Interrelationships of Agriculture

Agriculture and agribusiness education personnel recognize that we are living in an increasingly interdependent and interrelated world in which agriculture, along with every other significant enterprise, is closely interwoven with the entire economic and social structure of the community, the state, the nation, and the world. In such circumstances, it is necessary for the agricultural worker, and particularly the leaders of agriculture and agribusiness—both in their own interests and in the interests of others—to understand and appreciate the importance of these interrelationships.

It is also necessary for those within the industry and other members of society to understand and appreciate the importance of agricultural interrelationships in their world. Those engaged in agriculture must understand and cooperate with legitimate interest groups, each of which has its own conception of the public welfare.